

June 3, 2007 (LS)

**MY BROTHER, MY ENEMY
GENESIS 36.1–37.1**

1. ESAU: THE CONTINUING BROTHER-BROTHER STRUGGLE

Where it all began: Esau's genealogy section ends in 37.1 with a short statement about Jacob. Contrast set up.

Struggle begins in the womb. These two boys were two nations struggling against one another. The promise of God was that the older would serve the younger (cf. 25.23).

This was a battle between the seeds. These individuals become families, and these families become nations. The struggle that occurred in the womb has continued throughout their lives with brief times of respite. But the struggle between Jacob and Esau from the womb continues throughout the history of their progeny.

Edom, forever associated with the "red": "Now this is the genealogy of Esau, *who is Edom.*" Stated 4x: vv. 1, 8, 19, 43.

Edom = "red." The reason that Esau received the name "Edom" was because he sold his firstborn birthright for, literally, a bowl of "red;" i.e., "red stew," which might possibly be some form of blood stew. Cf. 25.30.

Esau's descendants will forever live in infamy saddled with the name that associates them as rejecters of God's covenant. They are the ones whose father forsook his privilege of being the firstborn and sold it for a bowl of *edom*.

So, from here on out throughout the rest of the biblical record, when we read/hear the word Edom, we are to be reminded that this is the brother who despised his birthright and, thus, despised God's covenant.

Intermarriage with the Canaanites: see marriages in chs. 26 & 28. Different names, same women. (E.g., Anah in 36.24 is a father of one of the wives of Esau. But back in ch. 26.34 he is called Beerli. Beerli means "my well." He discovered hot springs. He discovered a well and was called "my well.")

Esau marries Canaanite women and one of the daughters of Ishmael, the non-seed-line family. Esau falls into the sin of the apostate sons of Shem back in ch. 6 who intermarried with the daughters of men. That is, instead of requiring conversion from the women and then marrying, he adopted their culture—which would include their gods—with them.

In his choice of marriages Esau is showing his disdain for God's covenant. We know this from the fact that when the first marriages are recorded, these women were a grief to Isaac and Rebekkah (26.35). The second round of marriage to one of the daughters of Ishmael was in response to seeing the blessing and obedience of Jacob, his brother (28.6-9).

Another emphasis regarding the marriages of Esau here is that he married the daughters of Canaan. Canaan, you might recall, is the cursed son of Ham and the grandson of Noah. The curse involved Canaan being a slave of slaves to his brother (cf. 9.25-27). As Esau aligns himself with the Canaanites, he is positioning himself to receive the curse of Canaan. He himself will be a slave of slaves.

Separation from the seed: 36.6-8: Esau took all that he had and went to a place away from the face (lit.) of his brother Jacob. He did this because "their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock."

Cp. ch. 13: Abraham and Lot. Brother-brother struggle (Abraham appeals to Lot in 13.8; i.e., "we are brothers.")

There the land "fights" against them so that Lot must be separated from Abraham to make way for the true seed (which would be Isaac). Here is the same thing as well. Israel's family would be the ones who would inherit the promise.

But, lest we forget, this is also the set up for the seed—Abraham—to rescue Lot; something that happens in ch. 14. He is separated from Lot ultimately for Lot's sake; i.e., so that he might save him from the kings of the land.

From Rebekah's womb to the Herods: Num 20 - Edom refuses passage of Israel.

God's word delivered through Balaam a little later on promises, though, that Edom will be dispossessed by Israel (Num 24.18-19).

Eventually this promise comes to pass when David subjugates Edom (2 Sam 8.14). But Edom doesn't like being under the yoke of his brother, so he revolts against Jehoram, king of Judah, later, breaking the yoke (cf. 2Kgs 8).

Ezek 25.12-14 - Edom obviously takes advantage of the Babylonian siege against Judah. Psa 137.7 deals with this, and the prophets Obadiah and Amos also bring words of condemnation for Edom for their mistreatment of Israel.

Culminates in Jesus' battle with Herod the Idumean/Edomite. Herod's son (also Herod) kills James and seeks to kill Peter.

Hope for the people of Edom: Cf. Deut 23.7-8 - Edomites are allowed into the assembly/church of YHWH in 3rd generation.

This reflects the graciousness of YHWH and the mission of Israel; i.e., the incorporation of the nations. The third generation of Edomites could become a part of the assembly of YHWH.

One famous Edomite that was brought into the assembly was Caleb. Caleb was a Kenizzite, something that is emphasized in Scripture (cf. Num 32.12; Josh 14.6, 14). A Kenizzite is a descendant of Kenaz, son of Eliphaz, grandson of Esau. Incorporated into the tribe of Judah and represents that tribe as one of the spies.

Cf. also Amos 9.11f. - James the leader of the church in Jerusalem says that this is fulfilled in Christ. I.e., that a remnant of the Edomites are included in God's church.

2. EDM: THE WICKED PRECEDE THE RIGHTEOUS IN DOMINION

15, even 16 v. 12: Cp. Cain and the Tower of Babel people. They build cultures faster than the righteous. (This is the calling of the sons of God; cf. ch. 12.1-3).

At this time Edom has more sons than Jacob (vv. 9-14). They are "chiefs" (vv. 9-14). He is nation/culture building.

The way a house or nation is built is through the raising up of sons. The more sons you have the bigger your nation. (This connection is almost assumed through all of Scripture. Psa 127 equates children with building a house, and God promises to build David's house through/with a son in 2Sam 7.)

Settled v. Sojourning: Edom is building a nation; Jacob is sojourning (v. 43)

Conquest now v. conquest later: Edom conquers the chiefs of Seir, taking their "promised land." Cf. Deut 2.12, 22. This is why they are listed.

36.43 indicates this when it says that this was the land of their "possession." That word translated "possession" indicates a "taking hold of" and even "seizure" of the land.

Kings v. no kings: the Edomites had kings before Israel had kings(36.31). Israel will have to wait to have kings.

vv. 31-39: there is no one particular family line of kings. There are wars between families and movements of capitals.

This is significant. You see, later God will promise David that his sons will reign on the throne of Israel. It will be his seed that will rise to the throne and rule over God's kingdom.

There is no stability in the kingdom of the wicked. Seeking power in the way Edom did knows no particular loyal or proper submission to anyone. For the kingdom of the wicked might makes right. The only loyalty there is to oneself and one's own advancement in power.

(1) The wicked still precede the righteous in culture building.

(2) An improper desire for power leads to destruction and displacement of your brothers.

(3) There is hope for God's enemies.